

Tobramycin and your Ears

Important information about side effects

Like all medicines occasionally tobramycin can have side effects. This includes damage to your ears. You would notice this as feeling dizzy, difficulty keeping balance, ringing in your ears (tinnitus) or hearing loss. These effects occur more commonly when the drug is injected too fast, so slowing down the injection usually helps. Occasionally the side effect can be more permanent.

It is difficult to tell each person their individual risk but we know it is increased when you have kidney problems and are of older age.

What can be done?

If we think you are at risk of these side effects we usually try to avoid giving you tobramycin. However, in some cases, such as difficult infection or when you have many allergies this may not be possible. In this situation the team will discuss the risks and benefits with you.

Monitoring

The amount of tobramycin in your blood will be closely monitored. This helps us to check you are getting the correct amount of medicine to treat your infection but not too much. We may also monitor your kidney function during treatment.

Other medication

Other medicines that affect your kidneys such as water tablets (e.g. furosemide) or immunosuppressants following lung transplant (e.g. tacrolimus) are best avoided at the same time as tobramycin.

What can I do?

It is important that you tell the team if you are taking any medicines we are not aware of, including herbal or over the counter. It is sensible to try to avoid dehydration by ensuring that you drink plenty of fluids, unless told otherwise by the doctor.

It is very important that you tell us if you experience any of the problems with the ear as above.

Other side effects

There is a full patient information leaflet inside each box of medicine. You can ask to read this if you don't have a box to take home.

How to prepare Tobramycin injection

Information

Diluent for reconstitution: Already in solution
Volumes for reconstitution: Already in solution
Administration: Should be administered over 3 - 5 minutes
Storage requirements: Protect unopened vials from light and heat and store below 25°C
Part-used vials should be discarded

Do not mix with any other medicine.

Volumes to use

Dose of tobramycin	Volume required (40mg/ml)	Number of 80mg/2ml vials
100mg	2.5ml	2
120mg	3ml	2
140mg	3.5ml	2
160mg	4ml	2
180mg	4.5ml	3
200mg	5ml	3
220mg	5.5ml	3
240mg	6ml	3
260mg	6.5ml	4
280mg	7ml	4
300mg	7.5ml	4
320mg	8ml	4

Equipment

Tobramycin vial(s) (see chart above for amount required)
1 x 10ml syringe
Green needles
Sterile alcohol wipes

Procedure

1. Check drug, dose and expiry date
2. Wash hands thoroughly
3. Ensure preparation area is clean
4. Examine tobramycin vials for any particles (if any particles are found, discard the vial)
5. Swab top of tobramycin vial with a sterile alcohol wipe and allow one minute to dry
6. Using 10ml syringe and green needle withdraw correct amount required (see volumes on chart above)
7. Tap syringe gently to allow any air bubbles to travel to the top of the syringe
8. Remove any air bubbles in the syringe
9. Label syringe
10. Give tobramycin injection slowly over about 5 minutes. If injected too quickly, you may feel very dizzy. Ensure you are sitting down when giving tobramycin injection.